

**A Request for Proposals
For a Receptive Operator for the
Fredericksburg Regional Tourism Cooperative**

The City of Fredericksburg will accept proposals on behalf of the Fredericksburg Regional Tourism Partnership for a Receptive Operator to package, promote and manage products and service sales for visitors to the region. The envisioned cooperative would use the FRTP marketing and website to promote the convenience of advance, one-stop on-line shopping for visitors coming to the Fredericksburg region. The receptive operator would contract for hospitality industry products, including lodging, dining and tours for sale to Fredericksburg region visitors.

The tourism marketing program in the Fredericksburg region is a cooperative effort shared by the City of Fredericksburg, and Counties of Spotsylvania and Stafford. The FY10 marketing budget of the cooperative was \$550,000. The marketing focus of the partnership is in the Washington D.C, Baltimore and Philadelphia metro markets. Advertising and marketing dollars are focused in electronic and print (primarily newspaper) media. The tourism cooperative is currently operating under a three-year Letter of Agreement that will remain in effect until June 30, 2010. Negotiations are underway to continue the relationship for another term.

A link from VisitFred.com, the tourism partnership's website, will be provided from at least 90 percent of the website pages to the receptive operator's page. The receptive operator's page will be complementary in design to VisitFred.com but will be distinguishable to its visitors. VisitFred.com is the essential contact element in all of the tourism partnership advertising, marketing and promotional materials.

The Fredericksburg Office of Economic Development and Tourism will award the contract on behalf of the partnership by June 30, 2010. The contract will be awarded for three years. The receptive operator's performance will be reviewed each year and the contract may be terminated for unsatisfactory performance.

The Fredericksburg area is located in central Virginia on Interstate 95. It has a colorful colonial, Revolutionary and Civil War history. There are historic attractions plus four major Civil War battlefields in the region. George Washington grew up in Fredericksburg, and many of the historic sites have a tie to his presence here in town, including Washington's boyhood home, a colonial living history tavern, a plantation home, Washington's mother's home, and a colonial apothecary shop. In addition, the attractions include an area history museum, the James Monroe Museum and Library, and a historic home and art gallery. Shopping is available in a variety of settings, including the downtown historic district, Spotsylvania Towne Centre, Central Park, and number of additional shopping centers. Construction of a large water park hotel and conference

center is expected to begin in the third quarter of 2010. Water sports on the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers and Lake Anna, a dinner theater, wineries, golf, and other activities broaden the tourism offerings. Additional product development continues in the region, and the tourism partnership envisions extra promotional efforts marking the 150th anniversary of the Civil War beginning in 2011.

The successful response will include:

- A narrative description of the envisioned receptive operator service and business relationship between the vendor and the Fredericksburg Regional Tourism Partnership;
- a thorough description of booking software and references from other communities successfully using the booking software program;
- a detailed schedule of customer service hours and service standards including response time and product and geographic knowledge;
- a commitment to excellence in customer service and program for remediation when necessary;
- a schedule to present the program to potential regional hospitality industry clients for sales, website development and software interface, and inception of online reservations and sales;
- defined time standards for updating website offerings;
- a clearly presented program for collection of sales and disbursement to partners;
- a commitment to share all demographic and sales reporting information to the tourism partnership;
- a commitment to remit a fee-based portion of sales the Fredericksburg Regional Tourism Partnership in recognition of the direct and indirect costs associated with hosting and presenting the receptive service on the tourism partnership website, VisitFred.com, in marketing materials and advertising. A flat fee of \$2 per transaction for any purchase amount that is less than \$99.99 in price will be paid. For purchases \$100 or more, a \$5 per transaction fee will be paid. These fees will be collected quarterly and payable to the F RTP and will be used for promotion, advertising, marketing materials and/or website enhancements.
- expectations the vendor has of the Fredericksburg Regional Tourism Partnership;
- references for current and past clients.

The tourism partnership will consider favorably the candidate with existing business relationships in the hospitality industry and Fredericksburg region; a strong

business history that demonstrates good practices and excellent standing; and knowledge of booking and receptive service practices.

Responses are due by 12 noon on Friday, May 28. Please remit the proposal electronically to khedelt@fredericksburgva.gov and five hard copies of the proposal to:

Karen Hedelt
Fredericksburg Economic Development and Tourism
706 Caroline St.
Fredericksburg VA 22401
(540) 372-1216.

Questions regarding the proposals should be directed to Karen Hedelt at the contact information above. Answers to any questions will be posted on the City of Fredericksburg website, www.fredericksburgva.gov under “Procurement” until the day before the responses are due.